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ABSTRACT

Robert Kegan's constructive-development theory of adult growth postulates three different ways of knowing (instrumental, socializing, and self-authoring) and suggests that, although individuals develop differently, individual development can never be separated from culture. The potential of the constructive-development perspective on adult development to provide insight on how people's developmental capacities influence how they understand the concept of literacy in their roles as students was examined in a study of 41 adults in 3 adult basic education/English for speakers of other languages programs. Data were gathered through interviews, structured exercises, classroom observations, focus groups, and surveys. The way learners understood what it means to be literate was fundamentally shaped by their different ways of knowing, independent of age and country of origin. Instrumental knowers were oriented largely to the specific and concrete, externally observable behaviors and skills. Socializing knowers saw the need to learn specific skills and behaviors. Self-authoring knowers regarded themselves and other students as additional valid sources of knowledge. It was suggested that literacy practitioners expand their view of literacy instruction, incorporate principles of skills-centered and learner-centered instruction and critical literacy, and utilize the strengths of all perspectives on literacy to optimize the development of all learners. (Contains 58 references.) (MN)

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Introduction

Within the world of literacy theory, there are ongoing debates among theorists about the nature of literacy, methodologies for instruction, and about desired goals and outcomes for ABE/ESOL learners. Since these theorists arise out of different academic disciplines, the debates center on tensions that tend to exist along the lines that divide the disciplines. For example, cognitive and developmental researchers, trained as psychologists, show particular interest in understanding the internal workings of individuals as they acquire specific skills and mental structures that are associated with literate practices (e.g. Chall, 1996; Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson, 1991; Pressley, M., 2000; Rosenblatt, 1978; Ruddell, 1993). Sociocultural theorists, on the other hand, trained in anthropological and sociological traditions, consider the ways that literacy practices reveal information about cultures and group norms (e.g, Gee, 1990; Street 1984, 1993). These very different disciplinary backgrounds have therefore given rise to very different representations about what it means to develop and demonstrate literacy, as well as very different notions about how literacy should be taught.

For the practitioner, these debates present a kind of dilemma. Since the theoretical literature highlights the tension and disagreement between disciplines and perspectives, there is little mention of the ways that the theories might interrelate and complement each other (Wray, 1997). Both sides of the debate seek to persuade practitioners of the importance of accepting their own point of view while devaluing and criticizing the other. Both come with prescriptions and moral mandates for teachers' actions.

Practitioners therefore face decisions about how to regard these conflicting perspectives. One strategy for addressing this dilemma would be to choose among theories, addressing the dilemma in *either/or* terms. Identifying oneself, for example, as embracing *either* cognitive *or* sociocultural theories, one might then choose, for example, to be *either* a skills-centered teacher *or* a

learner centered teacher *or* a catalyst for personal, social and political emancipation. Alternatively, practitioners might consider that *both* sides of the literacy debates have valuable ideas and suggestions for practice. They might try to find a way of combining and blending different and competing perspectives, framing the dilemma in *both/and* terms. They might then choose to identify themselves as cognitivist *and* socioculturalist, as skills-centered teachers, learner-centered teachers, *and* catalysts for emancipation.

In recent years, literature on teacher knowledge has begun to describe the ways that, in the face of competing theories, some practitioners are taking this second stance. What has emerged is a portrayal of practitioner knowledge as complex, non-dichotomous, ambiguous and practical (Schön, 1983, 1987, 1988; Lampert, 1985; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). This literature has also begun to depict how teachers are able to come to grips with the various theoretical conflicts and complexities they face, presenting images of teachers as "reflective practitioners" (e.g., Schön, 1983, 1987, 1988) and as engaged in "managing dilemmas" (Lampert 1985).

We would like to suggest, however, that the responsibility for finding some type of incorporative framework should not only be a responsibility of practitioners. In fact, the notion of an incorporative framework implies that the relating and joining of various theoretical perspectives is not simply an improvisational affair, carried out in a situation-specific or reactive fashion. Instead, incorporative frameworks should involve deliberate and informed reasoning about how conflicting views might usefully relate to each other, indicating that the building of an incorporative framework is actually the building of theory.

In this paper we present one theory, Robert Kegan's constructive-development theory of adult growth (1982, 1994), which can serve as an incorporative framework for ABE/ESOL practitioners. We illustrate how this theory provides a way of joining conflicting perspectives on literacy within a larger framework, drawing on the strengths of each theory and showing how any

one perspective can be limiting. In this second half of this paper, we ground this largely abstract discussion in two specific ways. We demonstrate how Kegan's theory has been used as a lens in ABE/ESOL research, of which we have been a part, exploring how learners make sense of their experiences in different ABE/ESOL programs (Kegan et al., 2001). Kegan's theory brings to light key differences among the ways that learners understand their own roles and those of their teachers, differences which speak directly to the on-going literacy debates. We also discuss the implications of these differences in student understanding for teaching practice, providing examples both from our study and from other existing literature.

In the "Coaching the Curriculum" chapter of *In Over Our Heads* (Kegan, 1994), Kegan describes how his constructive-developmental theory embraces both skills-centered and learner-centered instruction for adolescents. Popp and Boes (2001) extend this argument to the subject of student competency, showing how competing instructional orientations could each make positive contributions to a larger theory of competency that also includes attention to and differentiates among the developmental capacities of learners. As we thought about these ideas, we began to take interest in bringing this argument to the more general topic of literacy, exploring the various disciplinary perspectives and teaching methodologies that enter into conversations in that field.

Multiple Perspectives on Literacy

Emphasis on the individual and psychological

Cognitive and developmental theories of literacy are sometimes referred to as *traditional* because of their historical placement in the heart of literacy theory or as *autonomous* because of their emphasis on the individual learner. A cognitive perspective on literacy (e.g. Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson, 1991; Pressley, 2000; Rosenblatt, 1978; Ruddell, 1993) focuses on the mind of the learner, emphasizing the mental processes that individuals use to generate meaning through and from written texts. Regarding reading, this perspective on literacy considers the background knowledge

and comprehension strategies readers use to create meaning; readers' abilities to be aware of and choose among these strategies; and the differences in strategy awareness and use among readers with varying levels of reading proficiency. Cognitivists also study the iterative processes that writers engage in as they plan, draft, and revise their work, and they compare the writing strategies of more and less proficient writers. Finally, cognitivists attend to the ways that reading, writing, and thinking interrelate.

Developmental or stage psychologists (e.g., Chall, 1996) emphasize the changing patterns individuals use as they gain initial and then greater proficiency in reading and writing. This perspective on literacy attends to the predictable ways that growth happens among learners and the interrelationships between writing and reading development.

Implications for Instruction: The skills and whole language debate

Within these theories that emphasize the individual learner's attainment of literacy, there has long been a debate about appropriate approaches to instruction. This debate, often framed as *phonics vs. whole language*, or *skills-centered instruction vs. learner- or meaning-centered instruction*, concerns the methods by which teachers assist learners in developing literacy.[1]

Those who emphasize skill development focus on cognitive growth and consider that learners must first recognize and understand the individual parts of language (such as phonics and vocabulary) which are necessary to be able to construct meaning of a written passage. The process is deductive, based on learning rules about language and applying them to particular contexts and works toward the goal of learners being able to demonstrate these skills independently (Kucer, 2001; Popp & Boes, 2001).

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[1] For a more detailed and thorough explanation of the nature of these debates with regard to a perspective on developing competency among adult literacy learners, please see Popp, N., & Boes, L. (2001). Competence as a developmental process. In R. Kegan & M. Broderick & E. Drago-Severson & D. Helsing & N. Popp & K. Portnow & Associates (Eds.), *Toward a "new pluralism" in the ABE/ESL classroom: Teaching to multiple "cultures of mind"--a constructive developmental approach.* Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

Those who support whole language instruction emphasize reading as the generation of meaning and believe that the goal of reading for understanding and new learning should be placed at the center of instruction. Learning about texts is therefore inductive, beginning with attention to the whole text and then moving to a study of its various parts (Goodman, 1986; Kucer, 2001, Newman, 1985; Wray, 1997), and more attention is paid to affective concerns such as learners' motivation to read and enjoyment of that process (Goodman, 1986). Consideration is therefore given to the personal qualities of the teacher, such as being sympathetic (Wray, 1997) and compassionate (Goodman, 1986). Although literacy is still considered a personal attribute or competency, whole language advocates stress the collaborative and social nature of literacy acquisition, as learners and teachers inform the meanings and purposes that each individual brings to a classroom (Newman, 1985; Popp & Boes, 2001).

Emphasis on groups, the anthropological and sociological

Rather than viewing literacy as something an individual acquires and then possesses, socioculturalists (e.g, Gee, 1990; Street 1984, 1993) understand reading and writing as processes that we are socialized to do. They point out that we are enculturated to read certain types of texts and to read them in certain ways. These theorists therefore focus not on the individual who acquires these skills but on the social groups and institutions that determine and measure the skills and individuals' ability to perform them. As Gee (1990) explains, "One always and only learns to interpret texts of a certain type in certain ways through having access to, and ample experience in, social settings where texts of that type are read in those ways" (p. 45). These social institutions operate within larger cultural frameworks, and the literacy practices of any individual or group will therefore reflect that individual or group's position in society. The sociocultural perspective examines how institutions and groups use literacy as a way of producing and controlling knowledge and power.

Implications for Instruction: Critical Literacy

Critical theorists (e.g., Freire, 1981, 1989; Giroux, 1988; Macedo, 1994; Brookfield, 1987) argue that teachers must address political and ideological issues in their own instructional practice. According to them, unless learners are explicitly invited to consider and challenge the ways in which literacy, texts, and classrooms often mirror and reinforce the dominant ideologies and power structures in society, social inequities will continue to be perpetuated. In adopting a critical stance toward the ways that readers, writers and texts function in society, and evaluating these functions according to the principles of justice and equity, learners come to develop a personal, social and political emancipatory consciousness.

Just as the skills and whole language models for instruction have been pitted against each other, the critical literacy model is commonly set in opposition to both. Kucer (2001) summarizes this new debate in chart form, highlighting the differences in emphasis between the individual and cultural perspectives on literacy development.

The Literacy Debates

← Continuum →	
Methods as Solution (the Great [Old] Debate) ←Decoding – Skills – Whole Language→	**Critical Literacy as Solution (The New Debate)**
A focus on the linguistic and cognitive dimensions of literacy teaching and development	A focus on the sociocultural dimension of literacy teaching and development
Teaching and learning through the use of various methodologies, technologies, and materials	Teaching and learning through high academic achievement expectations, acknowledging and valuing both the cultural competence of students, and the development of the sociopolitical consciousness of teachers and students
Values the individual experiences of the student	Values the experiences of the various groups of which the student is a member
A focus on the personal; expression of self through individual narratives	A focus on the socialized; expression of self through group-group relationship narratives and critique
Critique of text as it relates to personal experiences	Critique of text as it relates to issues of power, dominance, and group-group relationships
A tendency to see students as "individuals" and classrooms as unrelated to the realities of the society	A tendency to see students as part of various sociocultural groups and classrooms as reflecting the realities of the society
A reproduction of sociocultural aspects of society	A conscious attempt not to reproduce in the classroom the stratified realities of the society; for example, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, dominance of males over females; a critique and challenge of sociocultural aspects of society based on principles of justice, equity, and access
One-size-fits-all approach to teaching; methods are implemented in a vacuum	Many sizes for many types of students; methods are embedded within particular sociocultural contexts and histories
Evaluates the impact of various methodologies on students' literacy learning	Evaluates the impact of the curriculum on students' abilities to critique texts and contexts
Student failure is due to not finding the "right" teaching methods or to disengaged students and the groups in which they hold membership	Student failure is due to the failure of the dominant culture to support nondominant groups; need a critical sociohistorical view of educational institutions, teachers and learners
A reductionistic view of education	An expansive view of education
Methods as the necessary and sufficient condition for learning	Methods as a necessary but insufficient condition for learning
Literacy teaching and learning and individual linguistic and cognitive actions	Literacy teaching and learning as social practices and group actions
Literacy learning as an avenue through which to compensate for societal inequities	Literacy learning as part of a complex social, cultural, political, and economic puzzle by and through which groups and constructed and positioned
Taken from Kucer S.B. (2001). *Dimensions of literacy: A conceptual base for teaching reading and writing in school settings.* (pp. 257-8) Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.	

The Practitioner – Sewing the Pieces of a Literacy Quilt

One way that the theoretical literature on literacy treats these models is as opposing rivals, independent and exclusive of each other (Adams, 1999; Chall, 1999; Kucer, 2001; Wray, 1997). This frame leaves the literacy practitioner to choose among theories and methodologies. There has also been some attention to the ways that these models might be combined in instruction, arguing that, for example, specific skill instruction can be embedded in meaningful contexts (Wray, 1997). Some authors argue that practitioners should embrace balanced approaches toward instruction (Beard, 1993; Pressley, 1988) or incorporate aspects of different theories and methods according to their own pedagogical principles (Hannon, 2000), creating a more multidimensional perspective of literacy and literacy instruction. This approach

> acknowledges the various, intertwined, and symbiotic aspects of language.... When reading and writing are conceived as multidimensional in nature, the tendency to reduce literacy to, or understand literacy from, a single disciplinary perspective is avoided. The acknowledgement of the complex nature of literacy that must be viewed from multiple lenses is more than an intellectual or academic necessity; it is an instructional one as well. Such a view can serve as a foundation for literacy education and help ensure that curricula and instructional strategies begin to account for all that must be learned if proficiency in reading and writing is to be developed in our students. (Kucer, 2001, p. 7)

What is missing from this advice, however, is any specific recommendation as to how practitioners should piece together the different approaches. The many different contexts and conditions in which literacy instruction occurs might appear to prohibit any systematic effort at integration. It may seem, then, that the teacher is left to improvise, to fit the various pieces together in whatever form or design she can manage.

This paper suggests, however, that there may be ways of bringing these perspectives together as part of a larger conversation that could benefit the literacy field, especially in terms of practice. There may be theories that account for different ways that each perspective and model might identify and illuminate crucial aspects of literacy development and the ways that each might also have its own blind spots. Robert Kegan's theory of adult development (1982, 1994) may provide a

framework or design for embracing and organizing a larger conversation about literacy. Practitioners might consider this theory as one quilting pattern, into which they can arrange and join the various perspectives and models of instruction.

Theoretical Framework

Robert Kegan's constructive developmental perspective of growth is based in the field of adult development (e.g., Basseches, 1984; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Daloz, 1986; Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1952; Weathersby, 1976). Kegan's theory is particularly useful in relating literacy theories for two key reasons. First, in proposing a theory of ego/personality development, Kegan sees the self not only in terms of its cognitive functions but also as an integrating, unifying system (1982, 1994). Thus, in addition to accounting for cognitive growth (which is the focus of skills-centered instruction), the theory also attends to other dimensions of the self such as the affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal domains (accounted for in learner-centered instruction).

Second, rather than choosing *either* the individual *or* the social context as the central focus for his work, Kegan attends to the dialectical relationship between the individual *and* the social. (Thus, his theory also includes the critical and sociocultural emphasis on groups and culture.) As Kegan (1982) explains, "constructive-developmental psychology reconceives the whole question of the relationship between the individual and the social by reminding that the distinction is not absolute, that development is intrinsically about the continual settling and resettling of this very distinction" (p. 115). His theory is a description of evolutionary changes in the ways that individuals temporarily resolve the lifelong tensions between what is self and what is other, between what is subject and what is object, between one's embeddedness and sense of inclusion in the cultural surround and one's individuation and sense of distinctness from the surround. Kegan's theory therefore allows us to consider how individuals understand and experience their socially prescribed roles differently as

they grow and see their world differently. And, it helps us also see how abilities are differently valued according to the implicit messages of our cultural contexts and norms.

The Growth of the Individual

Constructive-developmental theory suggests that development in the way that we make meaning, or construct experience, is a lifelong process continuing throughout our adult lives. Adults evolve from one way of knowing to another more complex way of knowing at their own pace and depending on the available environmental supports and challenges. While these developmental processes are sequential, people of similar ages and phases of their lives can be at different places in their development.

We are all engaged in the universal and ongoing process of meaning making, which is organized by our developmental levels, or ways of knowing.[2] Our ways of knowing may feel to us less like the way things *seem* and more like the way things *are*. Three qualitatively different ways of knowing (and several identifiable transition points between any two) are most prevalent in adulthood: the Instrumental, the Socializing, and the Self-Authoring ways of knowing. A person's way of knowing shapes how he understands his responsibilities as a student and how he thinks about what makes a good student or teacher. It therefore influences the way he conceives of his social roles and kinds of competency he can demonstrate in these roles.

Those who make meaning with an *Instrumental way of knowing* possess the capacity to arrange information and experience in a concrete or durable manner, constructing categories which do not disappear from one moment to the next (as they do in early childhood), into which other particular things can be organized. For example, an individual can understand herself and others as having

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[2] Developmentalists use different terms (e.g., way of knowing, level, stage, position, order, etc.) to delineate the epistemologies they describe, yet all refer to an internally consistent frame of reference with which a person interprets experience. Readers who are familiar with the work of Belenky et al. (1986) may recognize that they also use the term "way of knowing" in their taxomony, which differs from that of Kegan.

particular enduring abilities, preferences and habits (recognizing oneself as, for example, a prompt, hard-working, athletic person). Instrumental knowers can also reason in a cause and effect manner and can attribute to others a separate and distinct point of view that may differ from their own. They understand their feelings as being made up of their on-going needs and dispositions and can postpone the satisfaction of their impulses in order to meet longer-term behavioral goals.

Individuals who make meaning with a *Socializing way of knowing* integrate the capacities of Instrumental ways of knowing into a larger structure and therefore have developed more complex abilities. These knowers can reflect upon the concrete to reason abstractly, demonstrating hypothetical and deductive thought. They can also reflect upon their own and others' points of view and can thus understand their relationships in a reciprocal manner, having awareness of shared feelings, agreements, and expectations that can supercede individual interests. They can internalize another person's viewpoint and coordinate that with their own, which means that their emotions are experienced as internal subjective states (as, for example, guilt, depression, self-confidence) rather than as social transactions. In being able to internalize and identify with the expectations around them (of others, of society more generally) they are also susceptible to being shaped by the surroundings.

The development of a *Self-Authoring way of knowing* is a move to an even larger, more integrative structure that engenders qualitatively new capacities. Self-Authoring knowers are able to reflect upon the abstractions, values, and social prescriptions with which the Socialized knower is identified. As the name for this developmental position suggests, these knowers understand themselves as authorities and are therefore able to take responsibility as the maker of their beliefs and emotions. More than just reasoning abstractly, they can organize abstract ideas into larger systems and explore the relations between abstractions, and so when they experience conflicts

between their own emotional states or values, they are able to mediate these conflicts for themselves across various contexts and various roles.

The gradual movement individuals make from one way of knowing to another is a *transformational* change, a qualitative shift in how people understand themselves, their worlds, and the relationship between the two. Each stage includes the capacities of the prior stage but adds new capacities as well. Transformational learning refers to increases in complexity in an individual's capacities, enabling people to take broader perspectives on themselves and others (Cranton, 1994; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2001; Mezirow, 1991). Transformational learning is intimately linked to the way people conceive of their adult responsibilities. The transformational learning which underlies changes in how people construe their roles helps them enhance their capacities to better manage the complexities of their daily lives and to demonstrate increasingly complex forms of literacy in their roles as students.

The Social Context as Holding Environment

> The person is an 'individual' and an 'embeddual.' There is never just a you; and at this very moment your own buoyancy or lack of it, your own sense of wholeness or lack of it, is in large part a function of how your own current embeddedness culture is holding you. (Kegan, 1982, p. 116)

Negotiating and renegotiating the tension between ourselves and our surrounding environment involves new ways of relating to and relying on that environment. While individuals develop differently, individual development can never be separated from culture. There is therefore always a part of the individual that is embedded in culture, that relies on the culture for meaning making. Our surrounding culture also contributes to the process of change and growth. Individuals do not transform by themselves; they get help from their environment that in some way recognizes and encourages the individual to negotiate a new relationship to it. Kegan (1982, 1994) uses the term *holding environment* to refer to the ways that cultures can serve to nurture developmental growth.

When the surrounding culture, or holding environment, *confirms* an individual's way of knowing, it acknowledges and cultivates the capacities that individuals already possess and demonstrate. Thus, individuals with different ways of knowing look for and rely on their culture in different ways and for different purposes. Instrumental knowers are confirmed when their environment recognizes and honors their capacities to follow specific rules correctly in order to achieve desired consequences. However, Socializing knowers require different types of confirmation, such as opportunities to demonstrate their collaborative inclusion or loyalty to shared beliefs. An environment confirms Self-Authoring knowers when it acknowledges the exercise of their authority and self-definition (including the self-chosenness of their connections and affiliations).

The culture can serve as a spur to growth when, in addition to confirming an individual's current way of knowing, it also offers experiences and information which *contradict* that balance. In this way, the individual experiences a challenge to the ways she is currently resolving the tension between herself and her culture. For Instrumental knowers to transform, the culture must therefore deny the validity of only taking one's own interests into account and extend invitations for mutuality in relationship. And Socializing knowers are spurred by invitations to assume responsibility for their own initiatives and preferences.

Finally, our surrounding culture promotes our ongoing growth when it provides individuals with the supports necessary to maintain the new balance. In shedding old ways of relying on the culture, the individual now makes new claims on it, and the culture must provide these supports with enough continuity to allow the individual to recover, re-integrate, re-equilibrate. These three features of a culture—confirmation, contradiction, and continuity—serve as guides for assessing whether any particular environment uniquely supports or inhibits individual growth (Kegan, 1982, 1994).

Opportunities and Threats Provided by the Social Context

In supporting or calling for individual growth, social environments often set expectations for how individuals should (and should be able to) make meaning and behave. For example, imagine an ABE/ESOL teacher who is dedicated to the idea that the learners in his class should be able to bring their personal stories into the classroom. In doing so, and among other things, he hopes to create a strong sense of community, a common bond among participants. It is important to him, therefore, that all learners take this commitment to community seriously. He expects the learners to be able to develop and feel a strong sense of allegiance to each other as individuals and as a whole group. He hopes that learners will often consider the groups' shared and long-term interests as paramount to their own individual and immediate needs. He expects learners to be able to make decisions about how to interact with each other on behalf of the larger ideals of respect, cooperation, and reciprocity.

In holding these hopes and expectations, this ABE/ESOL teacher may have in mind particular behaviors he would like his students to demonstrate. He seems to be expecting that his students will be able to subordinate their own immediate needs to those of a larger group, to understand and be able to think abstractly, to have developed a sense of their own internal states. In calling for these things, he is actually making a demand for students to have a developed a particular way of knowing, a Socializing way of knowing.

When individuals, or programs, or institutions, or the larger cultures in which we participate make these demands, they are actually setting a kind of curriculum. These expectations, which can be explicitly stated or hidden in cultural messages, are not in and of themselves positive or negative. However, it is the way in which this curriculum functions that determines a culture's curricular soundness.

One issue is whether or not the culture provides sufficient and appropriate support to help individuals reach its expectations. Kegan (1994) uses the metaphor of a bridge to illustrate how the culture can meet the individual where she is and create a solid structure for the individual to cross to arrive safely on the other side, to the place where the individual can demonstrate mastery of the cultural demands. One way that the culture can fail individuals is by setting these expectations and demanding they be met without also making good bridges available. A second concern involves the ways that the culture might provide better and more appropriate bridges to some individuals or groups than it does to others. It could do this in two ways. One is that not all individuals have important forms of support (familial, social, and otherwise) available to them. These cultural supports can determine how and whether individuals survive and thrive. Furthermore, cultures also differently value certain groups of people over others, and marginalized or oppressed groups are often less likely to have access to the types of bridges necessary for them to flourish.

Theories of literacy, literacy programs and classrooms, and teaching practices are no different – they may require certain abilities. Some students may have access (and may have experienced) different types of support in developing those abilities. Some students may be exposed to messages which devalue and denigrate them (and their abilities).

Bringing Kegan's Theory to the Literacy Debates

In sum, Kegan's theory locates capability in individuals, expectations in society, and examines the relationship between them. It offers a way to evaluate and critique social expectations and the distribution of power. The theory acknowledges the importance and value of a curriculum with high expectations, but it also illustrates that the final destination (the ability to meet those expectations) is not the same as the journey (the nurturing and development of the capacities to meet expectations). It therefore offers one possible frame for a more synthetic theory of literacy development. It accounts for an individual's cognitive processes and growth, issues that are emphasized by skills-

based instructors. However, in positing a larger view of the self that includes affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal processes, the theory also integrates learner-centered theoretical perspectives. Finally, the theory attends to the ways that a surrounding culture sets a curriculum and then supports, challenges, and evaluates individual growth and performance. It therefore includes an examination of groups and societies, including the critical literacy perspective on power structures and ideologies.

In this next section, we describe how we applied this theory to our study of learners in three ABE programs, and how this theory relates and incorporates differing philosophies of literacy instruction.

Description of Research Project

As members of one research project (Kegan et al., 2001), funded by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), we studied the internal experiences of learning and change of 41 adults as they participated in three adult basic education (ABE) programs. One component of this study investigated how a constructive-developmental perspective on adult development might give us some insight into how people's developmental capacities (or ways of knowing) influence how they understand the concept of literacy in their roles as students. We wondered, what does the same concept look like from the perspectives of differing ways of knowing? How might students change their understanding of this concept over time? How do these different ways of understanding impact our conceptualizations of what it means for students to develop literacy? What are the implications of these conceptualizations for teachers of adult learners?

Methods

Three ABE settings were selected, and all were widely considered to achieve excellent and targeted results and to set benchmarks for other programs to emulate. These programs were also longer

term (9 to 14 months), enabling us to explore the possibility of transformational growth among students, whom we followed during 1998-9. The programs focused on enhancing literacy in the context of three different social roles and included: a preparation program for entry into college level coursework; a parent education program; and a workplace program leading to a high school diploma. The sample of 41 learners was diverse with respect to race, ethnicity, age, past educational experiences, socioeconomic status, and social roles. The great majority of participants were non-native English speakers.

We administered a variety of data collection methods and tools—including qualitative interviews, structured exercises, classroom observations, focus groups, quantitative survey type measures and Likert scales—to each learner on at least three different occasions during the study. Analysis in the early phase consisted of coding interviews and role-maps, developing coding schema, compiling lists of emerging themes, reducing the coding list to reflect key emerging concepts, building matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) that illustrated each participant's response to key questions, and creating narrative summaries. Developmental interviews, including subject-object interviews (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman & Felix, 1988) and participants' answers to dilemma-based vignettes were also scored. The second phase of analysis included developing responses to analytic questions, tracing changes in participants' descriptions of their roles, and inter-relating participants' data to illuminate developmental patterns and to connect these patterns to key questions and themes. Looking particularly for features demonstrating change across time, we analyzed the factors that coincided with these changes and developed case studies of key participants, whose stories served as case examples.

There are several ways we strove to maximize the validity of our interpretations. We drew from multiple forms and sources of data. We employed multiple types of analysis, and each analysis was conducted by and compared among multiple researchers. Throughout our analysis, we looked

for and examined discrepant data to test both the power and scope of our theory (Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1998). Finally, by attending to the data at the level of the individual narrative, group patterns, and case write-ups, we have built theory that accounts for the many levels of data and role specific perspectives on its interpretation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The Good Student

Learners in our study *did not* tend to identify "increasing literacy" as a stated goal for entering their programs. Learners *did* tend to agree that they wanted to become successful students as a step along the way to meeting their longer-term personal and professional goals. We suggest, however, that by describing how learners differently understand what it means to be a good student, we are in fact exploring one facet of their conceptions of literacy. As students in ABE/ESOL programs, learners' literacy skills are explicitly addressed, advanced, and measured, and all the learners in our study shared the experience of being a student (while their larger goals and contexts for literacy demonstration and development varied). Furthermore, as the sociocultural perspective makes clear, literacy is culturally defined and evaluated, and educational institutions such as those that run the three programs in our study tend to possess the power of making these decisions about what constitutes literacy, at least for those enrolled in their programs.

What we discovered was that the ways that learners understood what it means to be literate, and specifically what it means to be a "good student," were fundamentally shaped by their different ways of knowing, independent of age and country of origin. In other words, people of the same age, or from the same country, nonetheless defined things quite differently if they were at different developmental positions. We provide a brief overview of these different orientations here and refer readers to the published research monograph (Kegan et al., 2001) for more detailed descriptions, information specific to each program, as well as additional quotes from the learners we interviewed.

Instrumental learners oriented largely to the specific and concrete, externally observable behaviors and skills that they had to acquire to be successful as students. They described the importance of improving their academic English language skills, (including learning new vocabulary and constructing five-paragraph essays) and developing successful strategies for studying (such as note taking, using a textbook effectively, and completing homework regularly and correctly). Other particular behaviors that Instrumental learners emphasized included asking questions and offering opinions in class discussions; attending all classes and arriving to them promptly; and utilizing institutional forms of academic support such as personal tutoring and computer software programs. Considering the identified behaviors and concrete skills as the keys to academic success, these learners were likely to evaluate their learning based on the grades and course credit they received and according to their ability to produce the "right" answers. Although all participants named these kinds of concerns, what distinguishes Instrumental learners from the others is that they described *only* these concerns (Drago-Severson, 2001; Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001; Kegan et al., 2001; Portnow, Diamond, & Pakos Rimer, 2001).

INSTRUMENTAL KNOWERS' EXPECTATIONS FOR A GOOD STUDENT	SAMPLE QUOTATIONS
These learners conceived good students as those who study hard, follow clear directions and rules provided by teachers. In their view, good students gather a lot of information and skills (i.e., knowledge is constructed as an accumulation of facts and skills). Good students focus on finding the right answers and the right ways to do things. For these learners, good students do well academically and they assess this by getting good grades, which are assigned by teachers.	"If we spend some time and we study much, there will be no difficulty." A good student will "come on time, do your homework, respect the teacher, you do what she told you to do." Good students "get the right answers," and in taking notes, "write down [the explanation] exactly."

Taken from Drago-Sevreson et al., 2001 and compiled from Drago-Severson, 2001; Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001; Kegan et al., 2001; Portnow, Diamond, & Pakos Rimer, 2001.

Like Instrumental learners, *Socializing learners* saw the need to learn specific skills and behaviors and included these concerns in their explanations. However, they also oriented to abstract

purposes and internal characteristics, such as considerations of character and personality that could help them acquire and were augmented by particular skills and new types of knowledge. To become good students and learn effectively in their new environment, they emphasized the importance of maintaining a "positive" attitude, a sense of "hope," and the "will to learn." Accordingly, these students tended to refer to their attitudes and their personality when they evaluated their learning, judging themselves on their ability to remain open and receptive to new learning (Drago-Severson, 2001; Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001; Kegan et al., 2001; Portnow, Diamond, & Pakos Rimer, 2001).

SOCIALIZING KNOWERS' EXPECTATIONS FOR A GOOD STUDENT	SAMPLE QUOTATIONS
For these learners, good students have the right internal characteristics to learn. In their view, good students maintain positive attitudes about themselves and the subjects they are studying. Good students are those who rely on their teachers to tell them what they should know.	"I think that hope help the students improve the study." "The more [students] are open, they learn new things." Good students feel "comfortable" and "self-confident." "I always ask my teacher, and he always explain, and I think this is wonderful."

Taken from Drago-Sevreson et al., 2001 and compiled from Drago-Severson, 2001; Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001; Kegan et al., 2001; Portnow, Diamond, & Pakos Rimer, 2001.

Demonstrating similar concerns about acquiring new skills and knowledge and acknowledging the importance of more abstract internal states, *Self-Authoring learners* referred to and concentrated on additional priorities. These students often described their struggles to master the English language in terms of how effectively they were able to communicate the complexity of their ideas. They showed interest in differences of opinion where each perspective could be considered as a possible and viable alternative that could inform their own understanding. Thus, rather than relying on teachers to communicate correct information or ideas as both Instrumental and Socializing learners did, Self-Authoring students regarded themselves and other students as additional valid sources of knowledge. These learners had the developmental capacity to evaluate

their teachers and the subject matter by their usefulness in meeting the learners' own self-constructed goals (Drago-Severson, 2001; Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001; Kegan et al., 2001; Portnow, Diamond, & Pakos Rimer, 2001).

SELF-AUTHORING LEARNERS' EXPECTATIONS FOR A GOOD STUDENT	SAMPLE QUOTATIONS
For these learners, good students can create and explain their own complex ideas. These learners are comfortable holding ideas or opinions that differ from their teachers' and can evaluate their own learning experiences by how well they meet their self-constructed goals. These learners are able to take responsibility for our own learning.	"I can use the English writing to express my thought, my feeling." "I have a deeply impression that I can talk it." "No matter how good teacher you have, if you don't want to learn, you're not going to learn nothing." "Before I thought… teachers [were] supposed to know… But now I know it's up to me."

Taken from Drago-Sevreson et al., 2001 and compiled from Drago-Severson, 2001; Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001; Kegan et al., 2001; Portnow, Diamond, & Pakos Rimer, 2001.

Creating a Good Holding Environment for Learners

The fact that adult students in any one program are likely to have these qualitatively different ways of knowing, different ways of conceptualizing their roles, creates an interesting puzzle for adult educators to consider. On the one hand, a constructive-developmental model of growth describes progression, evolution, increases in one's complexity and ability for integration. Learners with a Self-Authoring way of knowing possess capacities that those who are Socializing knowers do not yet possess. And in turn, learners with a Socializing way of knowing possess capacities that those who are Instrumental knowers do not yet possess.

On the other hand, each of these different ways of understanding and demonstrating what it means to be a good student also illustrate sincere and legitimate ways of being differently able to understand this role. A constructive-developmental approach therefore offers an expanded, pluralistic view of adult literacy that takes into account the ways in which adults have different capacities and capabilities. We hope to emphasize what learners with each way of knowing can do, not just what they cannot yet do. Educators who intend to be helpful to learners can be most

helpful by focusing not only on where they would like their learners to be, but also where learners currently are (Popp & Boes, 2001).

However, the suitability of any one of these understandings within a particular context will depend on the developmental expectations implicitly and explicitly demanded by that context. As educators, then, we must be aware of the ways we might unwittingly make demands on students' ways of knowing through our teaching, our curriculum, and the classroom culture we establish. What implicit demands are we making on learners? Are all learners given the supports they need to succeed in our classes? How might different methodologies of literacy instruction attend to the learning needs of some but not all adult learners? And finally, what kinds of teaching practices and classroom conditions help us to build solid bridges, nourishing holding environments for all learners to experience growth and success?

The Good Teacher

One implication of this expanded view on literacy is that it suggests the need for an expanded view on literacy instruction. Just as learners with different ways of knowing conceive of their own goals and abilities as students in qualitatively different ways, so too do they understand good literacy teaching in qualitatively different ways. In fact, participants' preferences for particular forms of teaching and for the personal and professional qualities of teachers related to their ways of knowing (Kegan et al., 2001).

Learners' Constructions of Good Teachers

WAY OF KNOWING	LEARNER EXPECTATIONS FOR A GOOD TEACHER	SAMPLE QUOTATIONS
Instrumental Knowers	For these learners, good teachers are those who show them how to learn. Good teachers give them their knowledge and the rules they need to follow to get the right answers. They know that they have learned something because they can do it (demonstrate a behavior) and because they get a good grade (a consequence).	Good teachers… "give you that little push;" "make me learn;" "explain how do to it, ask you write it down, and you write down exactly how to do it. Then we'd do it."
Socializing Knowers	For these learners, good teachers are those who care about them. Good teachers explain things to help them understand. Good teachers really listen and support them. Good teachers know what is good for them to know, and they tell them what they should know. These learners describe good teachers as having certain human qualities; good teachers are kind, patient and encouraging. These learners can feel, inside, when they have learned something and the teacher acknowledges them in that.	"If you don't have a good teacher, you're not going to be self-confident." "If [the teacher] doesn't teach you the way you learn good, that doesn't help you." "I ask the teacher to explain to me how I'm going to do it." Good teachers "keep explaining things in different ways, "show you different ways to learn;" "help you feel important and accepted… never forget you." Good teachers have a "kind heart;" "don't give up on students. You can ask her anything—she's interested in your learning. She cares so much."
Self-Authoring Knowers	For these learners, good teachers are one source of knowledge, and they see themselves and their classmates as other sources. These learners offer feedback to teachers to help them improve their practices and expect good teachers to listen to their feedback. These students think that good teachers use a variety of teaching strategies in their practice. Good teachers are those who help them to meet their own internally generated goals. These students know that they have learned something and when they have, they can then think of different ways to teach what they know to others.	Good teachers "understand their students." "She learn from me, I learn from her." "No matter how good a teacher you have, if you don't really want to learn, you're not going to learn nothing." Good teachers "make learning interesting. It has to be interesting to the student." "What you do with knowledge after it's given to you is of your own choosing." "I think it's very tough for a teacher to teach and listen and explain all the time." Good teachers "do their jobs and help me to do better, I'm proud of that."

Taken from Drago-Sevreson et al., 2001 and compiled from Drago-Severson, 2001; Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001; Kegan et al., 2001; Portnow, Diamond, & Pakos Rimer, 2001.

These differences provide one explanation as to why the same instructional practices can provoke very different responses and reactions among a group of learners. They also suggest that teachers who flexibly utilize multiple types of instructional approaches are more likely to increase their effectiveness with all learners, across different ways of knowing.

Instructional Methods

Constructive-developmental theory does not therefore endorse one approach to literacy instruction over another. Instead, it suggests ways that each perspective brings its own strengths and can be integrated into a larger and more encompassing view of literacy than is offered by any one perspective. Taking them one at a time, we show how an instructor using one particular perspective can create a solid bridge that provides the foundation for learners to take on new challenges and come to demonstrate new forms of competence. But we also suggest that instructors who are able to utilize the strengths of all perspectives may provide an even more robust holding environment that optimizes the development of all learners.

Skills-Centered Instruction

Skills-centered instructors understand their main goals in terms of how to help students acquire necessary information and cognitive skills, such as those required to meet standardized assessment criteria (Popp & Boes, 2001). In order to help learners demonstrate these cognitive skills, instructors may need to consider how these skills relate to learners' current ways of knowing.

Howard Tinberg[3], professor of English at Bristol Community College, describes the disconnection he recognized between his expectations for student performance and students' actual, current capacities. When students repeatedly expressed frustration and confusion over his assignments and were not able to complete them successfully, Tinberg began to notice that the

[3] In offering these descriptions of practice as examples of particular methodologies, we do not suggest that the practitioners cited and described would necessarily agree with our categorization. Rather, we suggest that the particular examples we provide here are helpful in illustrating features of each type of practice and are therefore useful ways for us to ground a more abstract conversation.

assignments actually carried with them "a whole complex of expectations and demanded a full range of thinking skills" (Tinberg & Weisberger, 1998) that required, in part, that students take on others' points of view and reason abstractly. He was, in fact, calling on students to demonstrate Socializing ways of knowing. Using Kegan's theory as a model, Tinberg came to redefine his goals.

> Our job as instructors is to gain a 'reading' of where our students are and then to reach out to them in a way that helps them move beyond where they are to where they need to be... We should help to facilitate the necessary transition—to provide, as Kegan argues, a bridge from one capacity of mind to another, one which is more complex and inclusive (Tinberg & Weisberger, 1998, p. 46).

In helping students to begin to make this transition, in this case, from an Instrumental way of knowing toward a more Socializing way of knowing, a skills-centered instructor would help to confirm a student's current way of knowing by providing – in the beginning, and for as long as it is needed – a great deal of structure and direction in the learning process. Teachers who "prescribe clear-cut objectives and straightforward techniques for achieving them" and give "immediate, frequent, task-oriented" feedback (Grow, 1991, pp. 130-1) supply the structure and concrete information that Instrumental learners need. The forms of challenge or contradiction teachers might provide for these learners when they are ready, would invite students to begin to make generalizations about the concrete and specific information they are learning, to use this information to form more abstract categories. Tinberg devises a sequence of tasks that he uses to help students first describe their own specific experiences and then, in response to his feedback on their drafts for them to begin to reflect on how these experiences relate to larger concepts (in Tinberg's case, about students' sense of what they know; how they know it; and how knowing relates to language).

Some cognitive skills may require students to move beyond even the Socializing way of knowing to develop Self-Authoring capacities. For example, the expectation that students demonstrate critical thinking asks them to "identify the assumptions that underlie the ideas, beliefs, values and actions that we (and others) take for granted ... [in order to] examine their accuracy and

validity" (Brookfield, 1987). These abilities are actually demands for a Self-Authoring way of knowing, where learners are expected to be able to reflect on their own feelings, values and thoughts and to use these to evaluate the accuracy and validity of their own or another's assumptions. For learners who do not yet have the capacities of Self-Authoring knowers, the expectation for critical thinking may ask them "to put at risk the loyalties and devotions that have made up the very foundation of their lives. We acquire 'personal authority,' after all, only by relativizing—that is, only by fundamentally altering—our relationship to public authority" (Kegan, 1994, p. 275).

Cognitive skill-oriented educators who seek to support students transitioning from the Socializing way of knowing toward the Self-Authoring way of knowing could confirm students' current reliance on teachers as authorities, providing them with the appropriate knowledge and skills they need to succeed. But, as Gadjusek and Gillotte (1995) explain, these instructors can use their authority on behalf of teaching critical thinking skills and can build up to these skills by first introducing less challenging tasks.

> We actively teach critical thinking – modeling it, providing specific examples of it, and making explicit the critical attitude that asks questions as well as the appropriate language for asking them. For example, as we interact with a text and solve the problems that it raises, we move from literal questions that establish the "facts" (for example, "When was Lincoln assassinated?") to more interpretive questions ("What was the effect of Lincoln's death on the outcome of Reconstruction?) to the even more difficult questions that require awareness of the writer's rhetorical purpose. (p. 50)

Karen Strohm King and Patricia Kitchener (1994), who also study individuals' development of increasingly complex cognitive capacities, offer additional instructional suggestions. Educators can identify "ill-structured" problems (e.g., overpopulation, hunger, pollution, and inflation) within their subject matter that they can introduce to their students. Problems with this type of structure are those that "cannot be described with a high degree of completeness or solved with a high degree of certainty" (1994, p. 10). Experts within a field often disagree about the best resolution to these problems, using logic within different frames of reference to arrive at their conclusions. In

presenting such problems to students Kitchener and King (1994) recommend that educators acquaint students with multiple "expert" points of view on the problem and eventually ask students to begin to generate possible alternative points of view themselves. As they tackle the problem, students should be encouraged to use evidence to draw their conclusions. In evaluating others' conclusions, students should focus on the strength or inadequacy of the reasoning used, in terms of its use of evidence, reliance on authority, and portrayal of opposing arguments. As students attempt to draw their own conclusions and evaluations, they should be challenged to consider any one solution as having an incomplete, problematic, and temporary nature.

In illustrating the ways that cognitive development can be cultivated, we suggest that this instructional perspective offers valuable insights for literacy development. Instructors who are able utilize these methods and specific instructional strategies can meet the current cognitive needs of learners with different ways of knowing, and we can help these learners develop more complex cognitive capacities.

Learner-Centered Instruction

Educators who prefer a more learner-centered classroom might also privilege students' individual development but see this development as happening within the context of a larger, supportive and caring community and involving a broadening of learners' understandings of themselves and society (Demetrion, 1999; Popp & Boes, 2001). As we have already shown, the particular form that this community takes can also make certain demands on learner's ways of knowing. An educator who envisions a classroom community such as we have described previously might then see his role as one of helping some students make the transition from Instrumental to Socializing ways of knowing. Since we have already focused on some ways of supporting cognitive growth, we will focus here on the ways educators can support learners' affective and interpersonal growth as well, particularly through the learner-teacher relationship and through peer relationships.

The kinds of confirmation teachers can provide for Instrumental knowers include explicitly establishing and enforcing rules and group norms. However, students can be challenged to begin to take responsibility for enforcing these rules (for themselves and others) by themselves. They can, in other words, be expected to begin to take other people's feelings into account while also considering their own needs. Students are also likely to respond to enthusiastic, motivated, caring teachers (Grow, 1991, p. 131), who can encourage students to learn and perform as a way of preserving these positive teacher/student relationships.

At one of the sites we studied, the workplace setting, learners were asked to write and then present their own autobiographical "Life Stories." For learners who were growing toward Socializing ways of knowing, the opportunity to hear about each other's lives helped to create a sense of commonality where before they had seen mainly differences. As learners began to identify the ways they shared values despite variations in specific experiences, they were able to push their own thinking beyond particular and into more abstract generalizations (Drago-Severson & Berger, 2001).

Learner-centered educators can also support students' growth toward more Self-Authoring ways of knowing. Teachers who promote an atmosphere of safety and security confirm students' sense of belonging and inclusion. This same safety can also provide encouragement to learners who are developing a sense of trust in their own voice and can allow learners to notice differences among themselves without threatening group bonds. Teachers who act as guides or facilitors help students to pursue their own questions and subjects of interest to them (Grow, 1991). Putting students' lives and experiences in the center of the class treats learners as authorities and their life stories as important texts. And as teachers invite learners to take on more authority for their own thinking, they can relinquish a bit of their own authority.

In their book *Women's Ways of Knowing*, which also traces the development of learners' different ways of knowing, Belenky and her colleagues (1986) offer and elaborate on one learner's positive experiences with a particularly dedicated English teacher. The student describes:

> She was intensely, genuinely interested in everybody's feelings about things. She asked a question and wanted to know what your response was. She wanted to know because she wanted to see what sort of effect this writing was having. She wasn't using us as a sounding board for her own feelings about things. She really wanted to know. (p. 225)

Belenky and her colleagues add:

> [This teacher] did not treat her own experience of the material under study as primary, and she did not assume that her students experienced the material as she did... She really wanted to know how the students were experiencing the material. As a teacher, she believed she had to trust each student's experience, although as a person or critic she might not agree with it. To trust means not just to tolerate a variety of viewpoints, acting as an impartial referee, assuring equal air time to all. It means to try to connect, to enter into each student's perspective. (pp. 226-7)

In such a climate, students are encouraged to listen to themselves, to their inner voices and to begin to credit these voices with authority. In listening to each other, learners can begin to conceive of truth not as singular and absolute but as multiple and context-dependent. Again, educators may have to explicitly teach learners how to regard each other as appropriately so that this new view of truth can begin to be created among learners.

> In the case of peer-group work, the teacher may initially need to join the group and provide the security (the holding environment) of a benign authority figure for learners who are insecure not only with the intimidating academic language but also with the demand that they take an active role in the learning process. However, although this figure participates with the group, he or she does not do the work for the group. Rather, the teacher participant's role is to model appropriate responses, deflect inappropriate ones, and provide safety, encouragement, and recognition of desired behaviors when they do occur. (Gadjusek & Gillotte, 1995, p. 49)

Like the skills-based approach to literacy, learner-centered instruction can address the developmental needs of all learners, helping them make transitions to more complex ways of knowing. These instructional methods attend to development that occurs not only in the cognitive domain but also considers how interpersonal, affective, and intrapersonal experience contributes to

cognitive development. In doing so, this perspective can emphasize the ways that the self seeks to unify and integrate its various components as growth occurs.

Critical Learning and Critical Pedagogy

According to Freire (1981), critical learning happens when students and teachers engage in dialogue to explore issues central to students' life experiences and interests for the purpose of developing an "increasingly critical understanding" (p. 46) of the surrounding culture. Ultimately, this heightened awareness can lead to greater political and social democratization. Mezirow (1991) also subscribes to the emancipatory power of learning in intervening with the corruption caused by unequal social power and influence. For both theorists, the process by which these changes occur shares many features of the developmental understanding of transformation.

> Mezirow's and Freire's approaches to adult education emphasize the importance of inner meaning and mental constructs in defining the nature of learning in adult life. Key to both of their theories is change—change brought about by critical reflection on the origin and nature of our submerged assumptions, biases, beliefs, and values. Tentative new understandings and new meanings are tested out in discourse with others. The process does not end there, however. Our new meanings, perspectives, or consciousness need to be acted on. (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, pp. 325-326)

However, in championing and facilitating transformations in learners, these theorists are actually advocating a *particular kind* of transformation, one whose outcome is self-authorship. Educators who teach for critical learning attend to, or seek to support, students' ability to be self-directed learners and critical thinkers, who can welcome multiple perspectives on a given issue and can consider themselves and their peers as sources of authority in the classroom. For example, Freire advocates "problem-posing education" (1981, 1989), which encourages learners to reflect on the underlying issues of power in their own realities in order to transform them. He is looking for learners who can enter into new, more liberated and collegial relationships with teachers. To support the development of critical consciousness, educators are advised not simply to present

students with facts and information, but instead, to encourage them to develop and express their own ideas and understandings about the subject matter.

Since many adult learners are not likely to have developed a Self-Authoring way of knowing upon entering the classroom, we might reconsider the appropriateness of critical pedagogy taught in a singular way for all learners.

> Focusing narrowly on the endpoint of development as Mezirow does may be problematic for a theory that commands so much attention from adult educators. Unless it is understood that Mezirow's theory only depicts the culmination point, practitioners might overlook the reality of their students' lives. Most adults simply have not developed their capacities for articulating and criticizing the underlying assumptions of their own thinking, nor do they analyze the thinking of others in these ways. (Belenky & Stanton, 2000, pp. 72-3)

Learners who have not yet developed self-authoring capacities see their teachers as authorities and report feeling mystified when asked to be equal partners in teaching and learning. And ironically, a critical pedagogy taught only in a fashion that requires self-authoring capacities may particularly exclude adult learners who have been marginalized and silenced by mainstream and dominant cultures. For many of these learners, their past experiences of exclusion have not encouraged or permitted them to develop trust in their own ideas and ways of knowing, and they may feel least comfortable when expected to engage in self-directed learning (Belenky et al., 1986).

We are not suggesting that literacy teachers should therefore reject a critical, sociocultural philosophy of literacy and teaching. In fact, all learners have the capacity to benefit from an exploration of the political values inherent in their own experiences as students. We are only suggesting that this philosophy might be best practiced with an expanded, differentiated methodology of teaching, one that doesn't overwhelm and frustrate learners with a demand for highly complex abilities. The question then becomes how educators who are committed to a sociocultural perspective on literacy might provide an appropriate bridge (in some cases, a very long bridge) to that way of knowing?

Learners who are making meaning with an Instrumental way of knowing experience confirmation when they can rely on teachers to make decisions that they will later learn to make for themselves (Grow, 1991, p. 130). Teachers who are sensitive to issues of power and dominance in classrooms may feel reluctance to act as authorities and present themselves as the holders of knowledge. However, individuals who have not yet developed the ability to generate their own critiques of the surrounding culture are at risk for internalizing the toxic messages inherent in that culture. As they encounter forms of personal and institutional discrimination, these learners run the risk of denigrating their own or others' cultures, unless other types of supports are provided.

From a sociocultural perspective, the kinds of contradictions instrumental learners might most need to help them develop Socializing ways of knowing include opportunities to be inducted into a safe community of learners. Teachers therefore need to be vigilant about the ways that we exercise our own authority, using it on behalf of our political commitments. We can talk frankly with students, showing them explicitly how social power structures operate in the larger culture, in learning institutions, and in classrooms.

We saw examples of these types of interventions in the research project in which we took part. For example, a few community college learners struggled in some of their second semester classes, reporting that they were not learning and felt uncomfortable and intimidated by teachers or classmates. At risk of failure or dropping out, these Instrumental and Socializing learners often reported feeling high levels of self-blame and anxiety. Fortunately, these learners had developed a close network of peer and faculty relations during their first semester of study. In several cases, these professors and fellow students intervened, advising the learners to drop the class and to locate blame at least partly in larger, external conditions rather than in themselves (Popp & Boes, 2001). In imparting this advice, teachers and peers were not hesitant in exercising their authority on behalf of what they saw as the best interests of the students involved.

Educators can also provide bridges for students moving away from Socializing ways of knowing and toward more Self-Authoring capacities. Teachers can model and explicitly teach students how to become more self-directed, responsible, and critical in their thinking and learning. Again, this approach suggests that teachers do not abandon their authority in the classroom but to use it to encourage and direct students in developing their own authority. Students may feel most comfortable generating and voicing critiques that grow out of a safe and secure sense of inclusion in a learning community.

> Developing the capacity for critical thinking…is of the utmost importance for people who have been excluded and silenced. The ability to question authorities, traditional, and basic assumptions is especially important to those who have been treated unjustly. Paulo Freire (1970) makes that abundantly clear. These capacities develop most fully in communities where every voice gets heard, where people's stories are listened to with great care, and where their visions, struggles, and strengths are well documented. This enables groups to take their critiques forward, forge common goals, and engage in action projects that have the potential of transforming whole communities as well as the people involved. (Belenky & Stanton, 2000, p. 99)

In an article entitled "Learning about Racism," Beverly Daniel Tatum (1992) describes a course she developed on the psychology of racism. Her course seeks to help students understand how racism operates in their own lives and how they can respond to it. She deliberately structures her classroom to encourage students to begin to reflect on the ways that have experienced and participated in racism and oppression in their lives. She describes how students often bring to class culturally internalized assumptions about the United States as a just society and racism as relevant to other people's lives but not their own.

Tatum's course specifically seeks to contradict these assumptions and support students' increasing abilities to generate a more self-authored critique of their culture and their own perspectives. In order to create a safe space in which to cultivate these transformations, she institutes particular rules and guidelines for the class. For example, students agree to preserve respect and confidentiality regarding their conversations. They are coached to utilize particular

strategies and rules about how to offer and respond to potentially embarrassing or awkward comments. And, they are encouraged and reminded to speak from experience rather than in generalizations. In instituting and enforcing these guidelines, Tatum helps to structure opportunities for students to begin to develop and exercise self-authoring capacities.

By expanding their views about appropriate methodologies for applying sociocultural theories of literacy, educators can therefore address the developmental needs of all learners, helping them make transitions to more complex ways of knowing. Critical literacy instruction emphasizes the need to analyze learning environments and social structures, attending especially to cultural messages of power and dominance. A developmental perspective on this method of instruction accounts for how learners with different developmental capacities will have different ways of being vulnerable to and resistant of these messages.

One Classroom, Many Ways of Knowing

In each of the programs we studied (Kegan et al., 2001), participants varied in their developmental positions despite the fact that many shared a similar cultural background and were of similar ages. At one end of the spectrum, there was at least one learner in each site for whom Instrumental ways of knowing were dominant. Conversely, at the other end of the spectrum, there were several learners at each site for whom Self-Authoring ways of knowing were dominant. At all three sites, the majority of learners demonstrated some degree of Socializing ways of knowing. In fact, overall, we found the developmental range of the ABE/ESOL learners in this study to be not markedly different from the range found among samples of native English speaking adults with varying educational backgrounds and widespread levels of socio-economic status.[4] We suggest that as educators, we can expect to find a similar range of developmental capacity among the learners in all

[4] See R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 195.

our classrooms and therefore a similar diversity among their capacities to demonstrate different forms of literacy.

Developmentally conscious educators can look for evidence of students' evolving capacities, informally identifying the ways of knowing that might be shaping students' informal and formal writing as well as their contributions to class discussion. Even when it is not clear exactly where a learner might be developmentally, dedicating oneself to the goal of helping students continue to evolve can provide us with some direction about how to engage with them.

> For example, when Kroll (1992b) tries to foster what he calls reflective inquiry, he attends to the epistemic assumptions that are apparent in student responses and uses these to guide his feedback to students: 'When their responses are dogmatic, I foster all their doubts; when they seem mired in skepticism or paralyzed by complexity, I push them to make judgments; when their tactics are not fully reflective, I encourage their best efforts to use critical, evaluative thinking.' (p. 13, cited in King & Kitchener, 1994)

As we have shown, any one theory of literacy instruction can meet learners where they are and begin to challenge them to take on new ways of knowing. What would be most *unhelpful* would be to instruct in a way that meets the developmental needs of only one type of learner. For example, one approach to skills-based education might utilize a very concrete, highly scaffolded type of learning. In such a class, students might engage in rote learning, involving the memorization and accumulation of facts and information. While these facts and skills may be important, and this type of curriculum might appeal to some learners (especially those who are Instrumental knowers), it would likely underwhelm those at higher stages and also underprepare them for the types of work they are ready to do.

Similarly, it would be unhelpful for learner-centered instructors to expect all students to be able to prioritize the needs of the group over their individual needs without providing some supports and scaffolding for learners who have not yet developed these capacities themselves. Furthermore, learner-centered instructors might also consider how to help some students (those

who have already developed Socializing ways of knowing) and recognize that others (Self-Authoring knowers) rely less on their peers and teachers to provide confirmation of their learning.

Finally, among educators who embrace critical pedagogy, there is a danger in assuming that all learners will have developed the abilities for critical thinking and self-directed learning, or to assume that by setting up the class this way, students will necessarily be empowered. Instrumental and Socializing knowers will expect and find confirmation in teachers who are able to act as authorities who can actively set guidelines and make decisions on behalf of their students, even while featuring a socio-cultural, critical stance, if that is their preference.

As educators, no matter what particular philosophies of literacy we embrace, we may do well to consider the different ways students can demonstrate literacy and to scrutinize our overall program goals, teaching styles and individual lesson objectives for ways that we might be inappropriately cueing students to perform at a certain level of complexity in their meaning system. And since each philosophy of literacy instruction itself offers different strengths, we might also consider broadening our individual practice, looking to see how our own philosophies and methodologies might be augmented by the practices of others. We are therefore called on to consider a new form of diversity in our classrooms and in our instruction, one that accounts for the developmental needs of all learners and operates as a rich and sustaining community.

> In a community worthy of the name there are symbols and celebrations, ritual, even gesture, by which I am known in the process of my development, by which I am helped to recognize myself. Intact, sustaining communities have always found ways to recognize that persons grow and change, that this fate can be costly, and that if it is not to cost the community the very loss of its member, than the community must itself be capable of 'recognition.' It must operate richly at many evolutionary levels, dedicating itself less to any evolutionary level than to the process itself. (Kegan, 1982, p. 261)

Conclusion

In this paper, we have investigated ways that Kegan's constructive-developmental theory of adult growth can provide an incorporative framework for differing perspectives on adult literacy and

instructional methodology. A developmental view of literacy can encompass the best of both ends of the spectrum of the debate over what to teach and how to assess it. In the familiar *either/or* battle between advocates of more individually-based forms instruction and those favoring critical literacy instruction, a developmental perspective reframes the conversation as *both/and.* It embraces and integrates both positions. Adult educators might therefore use a developmental perspective to ensure that students' actual preferences are taking into account when debating the merits of different forms of instruction and program design.

The research we helped to conduct has explored the ways that learners differently understand what it means to acquire literacy in their roles as students. We have related these to methods of literacy instruction, relying largely on descriptions of practice provided in developmentally-oriented literature. New studies might utilize other research methods (such as ethnography, for example) to further investigate the ways that literacy teachers' practice can serve to support all learners' evolving capacities and demonstrations of literacy. Additional research might also explore how other features of learners' holding environment (educational institutions, programs, academic support services, etc.) can also best serve learners' developmental growth.

Finally, in advancing Kegan's theory as a incorporative framework for literacy theories, we do not mean to suggest that it is the only theory that can serve this function. As any one theory will have its own strengths and weaknesses, we recognize that this one necessarily will too. We are hopeful, though, that it might initiate new kinds of conversations among practitioners and theorists and suggest possibilities for how all members of the literacy community can engage in these conversations.

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